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Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 AID-05 AGRE-00 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5608
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY COTONOU
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, NG
SUBJ: PRESIDENT KOUNTCHE'S REPUBLIC DAY SPEECH

1. PRESIDENT KOUNTCHE'S REPUBLIC DAY ADDRESS WAS LIKE A DOCTOR'S REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE NATION--CONDITION: GOOD; OUTLOOK: IMPROVING; PRESCRIPTION: CONTINUED DOESE OF PRUDENT MILITARY LEADERSHIP.

2. NIGER HAD SOME CAUSE TO CELEBRATE DECEMBER 18; THE 1975-76 HARVEST, WHICH PRESIDENT PUT AT 1,490,000 TONS, OF MILLET AND SORGHUM, IS THE BEST FOR MANY YEARS. GROWING URANIUM REVENUES HAVE BECOME THE MAINSTAY OF THE NATIONAL BUDGET, AND CONSTRUCTION OF NIGER'S NORTH-
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SOUTH ROAD IS SET TO BEGIN NEXT YEAR. STILLWF THE PRESIDENT COUNSELLED PRUDENCE. DESPITE A GOOD HARVEST, THERE IS NO ASSURANCE THAT SURPLUS PRODUCTION WILL BE MARKETED OR REACH DEFICIT REGIONS. WITH A BROAD BRUSH, KOUNTCHE ALSO PAINTED NIGER'S LONG-TERM DISADVANTAGES--ITS HOSTILE CLIMATE, LIMITED RESOURCES, LAND-LOCKED

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POSITION, AND VULNERABILITY TO ECONOMIC FORCES WHICH IT DOES NOT CONTROL.

3. PRESIDENT KOUNTCHE THANKED INTERATIONAL DONORS FOR THEIR ASSISTANCE ANDSINGLED THEM OUT FOR KUDOS IN THE FOLLOWING ORDER: FRANCE, US, CANADA, FRG, PRC, UK, LIBYA, ALGERIA, EGYPT, FED, AND NIGERIA. THE SOVIET UNION WAS CONSPICOUSLY ABSENT FROM THE LIST.

4. PRESIDENT AGAIN CALLED FOR NATIONAL SOLIDARILY IN THE FACE OF NIGER'S PROBLEMS. STERN WARNINGS WERE METED OUT TO LABOR UNIONISTS, STUDENTS, AND ALL OTHERS HARBORING QUOTE IDEOLOGICAL PRETENSIONS UNQUOTE.

5. KOUNTCHE DECLARED THAT NIAMEY'S TWO LYCEES CLOSED LAST MONTH DURING STUDENT STRIKES, DESCRIBED AS THE ANNUAL BURLESQUE OF STUDENT AGITATION, WOULD REMAIN CLOSED FOR THE DURATION OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.

6. COMMENT: PRESIDENT'S SPEECH WAS BRIEF AND AS ALWAYS FOCUSED LARGELY ON FOOD PRODUCTION FIGURES AND BUDGET STATISTICS WITH FEW RHETORICAL FLOURISHED. DISCIPLINE AND UNITY WERE CONSTANT THEMES WITH CLEAR SIGNAL TO POTENTIAL DISSENTERS THAT MILITARY HAS NO PLANS FOR POLITICAL RELAXATION EVEN THOUGH ECONOMIC PICTURE MAY BE IMPROVING. DAVISON

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